

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Czechoslovakia Rail Gauges
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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION 50X1

1. On 29 Mar 52, The New York Times published an article and a map concerning changes in railroad tracks in Iron Curtain countries. The map indicated that some tracks in Czechoslovakia were being changed and some had already been converted to wide gauge rails. Insofar as Czechoslovakia is concerned, very much if the information in the article is correct. In 1948, there had been speculation concerning the conversion of the Czechoslovak railway system to wide gauge rails. Again in 1950-51 there were rumors circulating in the various ministries that the normal gauge rails would be changed to the wider ones; however, the decision not to change the gauge was not made until sometime in 1950. 50X1
2. Towards the end of 1950, various Czech periodicals published articles which praised the Ringhofer - Tatra Works in Prague-Smichov for equipment which they had constructed enabling normal railroad cars to travel on a wider rail. In October or November 1950, in the Wilson Station in Prague, such a railroad car a part of a normal train. The car was a demonstrator with equipment attached which would enable it to travel on a wider rail. A sign on the car read 'trial run' (zkusebni jizda); a group of people on the platform were talking about this innovation. 50X1
3. In addition, towards the end of 1950 or early 1951 it was announced that direct sleeping car service would operate between Prague and Moscow; however, this did not go into effect, for shortly after, it was necessary to change trains at the Soviet-Czech border at Cierna nad Tisou. [Cierna nad Tisou is the main loading and unloading point along the border.] 50X1

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4. Because of the complicated Czech railway system and the considerable technical obstacles that probably would be encountered in rebuilding tracks in Czechoslovakia, [redacted] that such a task will be under- 50X1 taken in the foreseeable future. In addition, the 'Friendship Railroad' (Trat Druzby) in Slovakia and the new addition to the main east-west railroad between Kosice and Bohumin are being built with normal gauge tracks.

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